

Preservation Farmington is a historic preservation organization created in late 2015 to fill a void in our local community. Our mission is to advocate for our community's history and to educate the community about the importance of maintaining the integrity of their historic homes. As such, we offer practical, hands-on workshops to historic homeowners.

House Bill 5232 and Senate Bill 720 would obliterate this need, as the loss of our history due to the passing of these bills would be great.

Owners of historic buildings, regardless of purpose, are stewards of these structures. This means that an owner is responsible for carrying on the history of a building while allowing it to serve the necessary purpose. Homeowners come and go, but the buildings themselves remain long after their owners have moved on. The buildings' history, as part of a community's collective story, should be respected.

The most effective way to regulate the stewardship of a property is at the local level, where a local historic district ordinance can provide parameters for maintaining the building while still providing an owner the flexibility to let the structure evolve as needs change. Without these parameters, much of the history of a structure can be easily lost, as can the structure itself.

Every community has a local ordinance which dictates how properties (whether historic or not) should be maintained and improved upon. Without such ordinances, properties can easily become overrun with unsightly objects such as cars, trash, and weeds. Buildings can fall into disrepair. Ordinances are necessary to maintain standards.

Homes generally fall into two categories: new or old. New homes are often found in subdivisions with a homeowners' association, where covenants with very strict regulations dictate to those homeowners what they may and may not do with their properties.

Similarly, a local historic district ordinance regulates the appearance of homes to comply with specific standards. Both sets of regulations are in place to preserve a community's appearance. The regulations differ in only two aspects: 1) an HOA covenant is not part of the municipality's code of ordinances, and 2) the focus of local historic district ordinance is to maintain the historical and architectural integrity of a structure.

Interestingly, the rights of a property owner are not being questioned in regard to covenants enforced by a homeowner's association. How does a local historic district ordinance differ?

The proposed legislation is an attack on the history of Michigan, not an attempt to strengthen property owner rights. Preservation Farmington urges the Michigan House of Representatives and Michigan Senate to vote in favor of Michigan history by opposing House Bill 5232 and Senate Bill 720.